



Your EAP Newsletter brought to you by Tornado Safety Tips



According to the National Weather Service, tornados kill approximately 70 people and injure 1500 more every year. Tornados are made even more dangerous because they can be so unpredictable; they can form at any time during the year and in any of the 50 states.

Tornadoes appear as dark, rotating, funnel-shaped clouds. Although they can occur at any time, they strike most often during late spring and summer, and then usually in the late afternoon. The area most frequently affected by tornados is the Midwest states, during the spring and summer months.

No place is totally safe during a tornado, but there are some precautions you can take to increase your chances of surviving a tornado.

Creating a Family Plan

The most important safety precaution that you can take is to create and practice a family tornado plan.

Practice this plan as a family at least once a year, and make any changes based on the results of your drill.

Flying debris is the greatest danger in tornadoes; so store protective coverings (e.g., mattress, sleeping bags, thick blankets, etc) in or next to your shelter space, ready to use on a few seconds' notice.

Tornado Warning Signs

Know the signs of a tornado: Weather forecasting science is not perfect and some tornadoes do occur without a tornado warning. There is no substitute for staying alert to the sky. Besides an obviously visible tornado, here are some things to look and listen for:

- Strong, persistent rotation in the cloud base.
- Whirling dust or debris on the ground under a cloud base. Some tornadoes will not have a recognizable funnel.

- Hail or heavy rain followed by either dead calm or a fast, intense wind shift. Many tornadoes are wrapped in heavy precipitation and cannot be seen.
- Listen for a loud, continuous roar or rumble that does not fade in a few seconds like thunder.

At night, look for small, bright, blue-green to white flashes at ground level near a thunderstorm (as opposed to silvery lightning up in the clouds). These mean power lines are being snapped by very strong wind, maybe a tornado.

In-door Safety Tips

The type of building that you are in will help to dictate the safety measures that you should take during a tornado.

If you are in a house with a basement:

- Avoid windows.
- Get in the basement and under some kind of sturdy protection (heavy table or work bench), or cover yourself with a mattress or sleeping bag.
- Know where very heavy objects rest on the floor above (pianos, refrigerators, waterbeds, etc.) and do not go under them. They may fall down through a weakened floor and crush you.

If you are in a house with no basement, a dorm or an apartment:

- Avoid windows.
- Go to the lowest floor, small center room (like a bathroom or closet), under a stairwell or in an interior hallway with no windows.
- Crouch as low as possible to the floor, facing down; and cover your head with your hands.
- A bath tub may offer a shell of partial protection.
- Even in an interior room, you should cover yourself with some sort of thick padding (mattress, blankets, etc.), to protect against falling debris in case the roof and ceiling fail.

If you are in an office building, hospital, nursing home or skyscraper:

- Go directly to an enclosed, windowless area in the center of the building -- away from glass. Interior stairwells are usually good places to take shelter, and if not crowded, allow you to get to a lower level quickly.

- Crouch down and cover your head.
- Stay off the elevators; you could be trapped in them if the power is lost.

If you are in a mobile home:

- Get out immediately! Even if your home is tied down, you are probably safer outside, even if the only alternative is to seek shelter out in the open.
- Go to the community tornado shelter, if one exists.
- If there is a sturdy permanent building within easy running distance, seek shelter there. Otherwise, lie flat on low ground away from your home, protecting your head. If possible, use open ground away from trees and cars, which can be blown onto you.

If you are at school:

- Follow the drill! Go to the interior hall or room in an orderly way as you are told.
- Crouch low with your head down, and protect the back of your head with your arms.

Stay away from windows and large open rooms like gyms and auditorium

Outdoor Safety

Vehicles are extremely dangerous in a tornado. If the tornado is visible, far away, and the traffic is light, you may be able to drive out of its path by moving at right angles to the tornado. Otherwise, park the car as quickly and safely as possible - out of the traffic lanes.

If possible, seek shelter in a sturdy building. If you cannot find shelter, lie flat and face-down on low ground, protecting the back of your head with your arms. Get as far away from trees and cars as you can; they may be blown onto you in a tornado. Avoid seeking shelter under bridges, which can create deadly traffic hazards while offering little protection against flying debris.

Staying Safe after the Tornado

- Keep your family together and wait for emergency personnel to arrive.
- Carefully render aid to those who are injured.

- Stay away from power lines and puddles with wires in them; they may still be carrying electricity.
- Watch your step to avoid broken glass, nails and other sharp objects.
- Stay out of any heavily damaged houses or buildings; they could collapse at any time.
- Do not use matches or lighters, in case of leaking natural gas pipes or fuel tanks nearby.

Remain calm and alert, and listen for information and instructions from emergency crews or local officials.

Call us for the support that you need. 1-888-290-4EAP (TDD: 1800-697-0353) or go to www.GuidanceResources.com. Agency ID: FEDSOURCE

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